

Antonio Maria GENTILI
THE BARNABITES



**Manual of history and spirituality
of the Order of Clerics Regular
of St. Paul Beheaded**

Chapter 5

BATTISTA CARIONI DA CREMA¹ ***“First Father and Founder”***

The Theatines and the Barnabites consider the Dominican Fra Battista Carioni da Crema as their Founder, or, at least, as the one who thought of the *Clerics Regular*, and then guided them in the first steps of their life. Someone even thinks of the two Orders as “two glorious outgrowths” of the Dominican Order.

Certainly, the Barnabites have priority in claiming this paternity. His influence upon them has been enormous, to say the least. Father Angelo Cortenovis, a passionate researcher of Barnabite happenings, had good reason to write that the news about Fra Battista and his works can contribute a lot to clarify our history

Let us try now to present Fra Battista Carioni as the inspirer - in action and teaching - of the first “Paulines.”

Carioni with the Dominicans

Battista Carioni was born in 1460. His religious upbringing gave him the characteristics of the “Reformer” as required by the new times. He was a member of the Dominican Order of Lombardy, which was very outstanding for the strict observance of rules and regulations, and for its good spirit. When he entered the Dominican Order is not known, but it was certainly before the end of the century. Some dates:

1494: he received the habit

1517: Padua, Sta. Maria delle Grazie

1520: Vicenza: Santa Corona

1525: Milan: Sta. Maria delle Grazie

While he continued preaching, Fra Battista, on request from devout persons, wrote some booklets. One of his admirers published one of them, *The Way of Open Truth*, in 1523, without the author’s permission. The publication was so full of errors that Fra Battista could not recognize the message it should have conveyed. Since there were so many adverse criticisms, he had to have a new edition printed.

Probably he was a companion of Savonarola and a disciple of Blessed Sebastian Maggi, twice Vicar General, who was surrounded by eight other Dominicans who have been declared Blessed. Also Fr. Ferrarese and Fr. Gaetano, both Master Generals of the Dominican Order, must have known him.

In 1518 he was in Vicenza where he met St. Cajetan from Thiene, who chose him as his confessor and submitted to him completely. Understanding his zeal, in 1524, Fra Battista urged him to found in Rome the first nucleus of Clerics Regular. In this way, for the sake of spreading Christian renewal, Fra Battista deprived himself of his right hand, but God’s Providence provided him with other means to accomplish in Lombardy and the Venetian territory what Cajetan was doing in Rome.

¹ A small town on the south bank of the Po River about 130 km SE of Milan and 70 km SE of Cremona, in a region of quasi-independent feudal princedoms and counties.

Encounter with Zaccaria and Torelli

In 1527 Countess Ludovica Torelli of Guastalla had Fra Battista called (or she went herself to Milan!) to be her spiritual director and obtained from her superiors and the Pontiff the permission for Fra Battista to transfer to Guastalla.

In 1528, another encounter had taken place. Quite often Fra Battista, traveling from Milan to Guastalla, would stop in Cremona, where he got to meet Anthony M. Zaccaria. Anthony Mary had just lost his spiritual director, Fra Marcello; Fra Battista came along at the right moment. Under his direction Anthony Mary improved his curriculum and his formation. With Fra Marcello he had got to know theology, and had entered the clerical status. Fra Battista led him to the Priesthood, and then followed and encouraged him in the good works he had already started in his own home town.

This change seemed to limit the Dominican's care to a few souls, instead it increased it and made it more fruitful. Shortly after the death of Father Peter degli Orsi, the chaplain of Guastalla, Fra Battista advised the Countess to take Zaccaria as his successor.

But Guastalla was too small for the ambitions of these reformers. Ludovica (Paola) Torelli was already thinking to start, in the house she had purchased next to St. Ambrose Basilica in Milan, a group of ladies and young girls dedicated to apostolic activities.

Battista da Crema just as he had pushed Cajetan Thiene in Rome, so now was hoping to give birth in Milan to a new group of reformers. His presence and his wise and experienced leadership guided the first steps of the future "*Paulines*."

Anthony Mary left his home town, Ludovica Torelli got rid of her possessions, and both went to Milan in 1530. Here they were welcomed by a "Cenacle of Reformation," called the "*Eternal Wisdom*" oratory, which will be revitalized by their dynamic life style, and will produce the cofounders and the first nucleus of the *Paulines*.

Ferrari and Morigia had been members for a while, and so also Fra Battista da Crema, intimate friend of Landini, the leader of the Oratory and an expert on St. Paul.

Anthony Mary introduced himself to them, and they detected in him the one who would carry on into practice their dreams: a society of reformers for good morals.

On May 31, 1530, Zaccaria ended a letter addressed to Fra Battista with these words: "*The conquest of oneself will give me the strength to write to you with facts and not words.*" He was referring to a work of Fra Battista published the previous year entitled, *On knowledge and victory over oneself*, in which Anthony Mary had probably been asked to collaborate. The book was published with the approval of the inquisitors Bernardino and Melchior Crivelli and was accompanied by the most explicit declarations of submission to the Church.

Carioni's work greatly influenced the spiritual formation of the *Paulines*, however, it had some expressions open to misinterpretation. Although Msgr. Landini, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Milan, highly praised the author's piety and doctrine, he nevertheless condemned it because of ambiguous phrases.

The Dominicans want Fra Battista back in the Congregation

Meanwhile the Dominicans were entreating Fra Battista to return to the convent, whose cloistered life he would probably have preferred. However, involved in an undertaking which he could not leave, he had given in to the Countess' urging, as we said above, and obtained the faculty to remain outside the convent and reside in Guastalla as her confessor.

When the permit by the Dominican Superiors expired, the Countess obtained from Clement VII, through the Cardinal who was the Major Penitentiary in Rome, the permission for Fra Battista to stay on. We do not know who leaked the gossip in Rome that Fra Battista

wanted to stay in Guastalla not only not to be under the obedience of the Vicar General of the Dominicans, but also to divulge, far away from Milan, one of his teachings, which was “dangerous as a heresy, and a source of disturbance.” Obviously this caused a Breve from Rome (by Clement VII, August 20) to the Vicar General of the Dominicans, to immediately recall Fra Battista to Milan, to try him, and, if guilty, to punish him.

Fra Battista went to the convent of Sta. Maria in Milan, to stand for the trial, and was found innocent. The Vicar General sent an official notification to the Pope. As a consequence the two brothers Bernardino and Melchiorre Crivelli, both Dominicans and Inquisitors, did not hesitate to grant the *imprimatur* to Fra Battista’s two books: “*Opera utilissima della cognitione et vittoria di se stesso*” and “*Philosophia divina*.”

The Countess asked again the Pope for Fra Battista to stay in Guastalla, and Clement VII agreed with a Breve dated July 10, 1531 (copy in the General Archive). The Suffragan bishop of Milan, Francesco Landini, the Vicar General of the Diocese, Giovanni Mitonso, and the Inquisitor, Melchior Crivelli, were asked to enforce the Breve. His Dominican Superiors were enjoined on August 4 not to interfere in any way whatsoever with their modus vivendi (way of life).

This friendship certainly was something out of the ordinary but its authenticity and irreproachableness was proved by the fact that it withstood derision and criticism from friends and foe alike. For example, in a bristling letter to Battista, March 9, 1532, no lesser than Bishop John Peter Caraffa, cofounder of the Theatines and future Pope Paul IV (1555-1559), denounced, in no certain terms, what he considered a thoroughly unseemly situation: “... it was a great scandal... to see a religious of your age and renown, after so many years of religious profession, jump from your monastery to live alone in the house of a widow of noble rank, young, beautiful, twice married, independent, wealthy, exceedingly sharp-witted, dreadfully capable of good and evil, mostly on account of her fragile sex and unreliable age. Not only that, but you took her triumphantly all over a city like Milan for everybody to see.” The fiery southerner Caraffa, sincere but narrow-minded, exhorted Battista, his elder of 15 years, to cease rationalizing his behavior which contradicted “not only the Scriptures and the teaching of the Fathers and all Church laws and religious rules, but natural honesty itself.” However, where the male chauvinist and overzealous Caraffa saw “sinfulness” and “scandal” and “shame,” Anthony Mary saw nothing of the sort. On the contrary, he must have felt privileged to join these high-minded and charismatic people to serve God and his Church. Indeed, an incident that occurred a few months after the first approval of the Order illustrated quite dramatically the closeness of Battista, Ludovica, and Anthony Mary.

After a short period of calm, the Dominican Provincial of the Two Lombardies, Fr. Angel da Faenza, without mentioning the Breve of July 10, 1531, on November 8, 1533, for the second time, dispatched a formal order to Battista to leave Ludovica’s residence at once and return to his friary in Milan. The order was duly backed by the usual threat of papal excommunication in case of noncompliance. But Fra Battista by now was very sick to the point of death.

The situation was tragic. The Countess Ludovica did not show him the letter of his superior. Not only that, but she was so incensed at the Provincial’s totally unexpected move that, on the very same day, she initiated legal proceedings against him. She contended that Angel da Faenza had no jurisdiction over her or over Fra Battista due to the authorization received by Pope Clement VII on July 10, 1531. The last Breve was invalid, because surreptitious: it should have reported in its entirety, or at least it should have mentioned the previous Breve, instead it ignored it completely. Therefore, she would not convey the Provincial’s order to Fra Battista. She felt that Father Angelo was “simply trying to harass me

for no good reason and with specious arguments.” The strong-willed woman would only obey a personal order from the Pope.

In the meantime, also on the very same day, November 8, 1533, Ludovica drew up two legal documents: an appeal to Pope Clement VII, to clarify the issue; and a contestation to the Vicar General of the Dominicans, Father Angelo da Faenza, who resided in Mantua, and through a notarized note, she named Anthony Mary as her “special legal representative.”

So Anthony Mary left for Mantua, on Sunday, November 9. On Monday, at about 10:00 a.m., he was at the monastery of St. Dominic. He went through the church, to the sacristy, and asked for the Vicar General or his substitute, who was Father Stefano Foscherari, the Prior of the monastery. The sacristan said that both were out on business. Was it true? Anthony Mary waited until 1:00 p.m., when the Friars, at the end of their meal, were coming out in the cloister for recreation. He rang the bell and entered together with the notary public and two witnesses, and ‘caught’ (as the notary note says) two Friars who were walking by, but they too said that the Vicar and the Prior were out of the city.

What to do? Although anxious to run back to Fra Battista, he had to wait, after giving the two lawyers, Malatesta and Delfini, at about 3:00 p.m. of the same day, the notary note that pertained to them.

Three days later, on Thursday, November 13, 1533, Anthony Zaccaria heard that Fra Stefano Foscherari was back. Again he entered the monastery with the notary public, Antonio Pontevico, and the two witnesses, Ludovico Negri and Gerolamo Santini. He asked for the Prior and, with proper respect but with determination, he contested against him and against Fra Angelo da Faenza, the hypocrisy and the injustice of their conduct, since they knew very well that Fra Battista had been authorized by a pontifical Breve to stay in Guastalla. Then he warned him about carrying out the execution of that surreptitious and invalid Breve, notified him of the appeal sent to Pope Clement VII, and about the presence in the proceedings of the two lawyers from Mantua. Then he ordered the notary public to hand over to Fra Stefano the authentic copies of all these documents.

Here the unforeseen happened: Fra Stefano refused to accept the documents. It was a legal escape: not taking the documents in his hands he could have claimed that he knew nothing about it! Did our saint express anger, he who hated so much any double standard? The fact is that he then said to the notary public: “He does not want to take them into his hands? Then throw them at his feet, and write this down.” And indeed in the notary document, drafted right after the episode, the notary public wrote: “Since he refused to take the said copy, I threw it at his feet on the floor, so that he could never claim that he did not know about them, been present Fra Stefano, who saw, heard, and did not say anything” (General Archive, Yd. 6). Then, with great anxiety, the Founder ran back to Guastalla.

The Death of Fra Battista

Meanwhile Fra Battista’s condition was worsening and on the night of St. Sylvester, between the years 1533 and 1534, he expired at the presence of Father Zaccaria.

The Countess obtained the archpriest’s permission to have him buried in the Augustinian church in Guastalla. She hoped to transport him to Milan as soon as the proposed monastery and church of St. Paul were completed, as it will occur later.

“One and the other our Blessed Father”

Anthony Mary had considered Fra Battista as *“my saint with God, who helps me to come out of my imperfections and cowardliness and pride,”* therefore, now that he was not present anymore, Anthony Mary felt the tremendous responsibility to carry on his work.

But he was sure that Father Carioni would guide him from heaven, as he wrote fifteen days after his death: *“neither you nor I have to bother about the troubles that are happening and will happen, because it is not we to carry the burden, but him. It is well known how he was always displeased with those who are negligent and unwilling to help themselves. Therefore, as far as we are concerned, let us strive not to fail, for Christ Crucified will take care of the rest by himself or through our Father”* (Lt 4, 40:34-38).

Anthony Mary, then, proceeded sure of himself, trusting in the protection of his two masters, St. Paul and Fra Battista, who from now on will be inseparable.

It is proved by the following.

As we know, in 1534, Anthony M. Zaccaria gave the habit to Anthony Morigia, one of the very first to receive it, and changed his name to Paul Battista (which did *not* become a tradition in the Congregation). Here the two ideals, the two loves are united into one!

And this will be repeated for the others, like, for example, Fr. Dolcetto who took the same name, or Fr. Caimo and Fr. Soresina who took the name Battista.

Meantime both the Barnabites and the Angelics were facing very difficult and decisive moments. Anthony Mary incited or rebuked, as needed, appealing to the two “fathers” of the new Institutes.

Writing to the Angelics (Letter 5), at the vigil of the Vicenza mission, in a masterly passage, already known to us, he touched upon the purpose of *“St. Paul’s children.”* The threefold program he outlined was presented as the immediate fruit of the teaching and example of the one and the other *“our blessed Fathers.”*

Analogous concepts, to confirm the role attributed by St. Anthony M. Zaccaria to Saint Paul and the Fra Battista in the life of the first Barnabites, are present in the Letter 7, of November 3, 1538, addressed to *“the children of Paul the Apostle, and ours.”* This could be considered as the first “circular letter” of the Order. Here too St. Paul’s and Fra Battista’s motives intermingle, leading to the same ideal!

Let us read what pertains to our purpose: *“You will satisfy,”* the Founder writes, *“the desire of our divine father, who, as you recall, wanted us to be stock and columns to renew our Christian zeal”* (Lt 7, 57:5-7). And he concludes, *“O sweet Father, you have sweat and you have suffered, and we shall receive the fruits; yours has been the cross, and ours shall be abundant rest; in other words, by always carrying and eating crosses we shall deliver your fruits as well as ours”* (Ibid, 57:9-12).

From the moving mention of Father Carioni he passes to exhort *“the children and stocks of Paul”* then he goes back to Father Carioni (*“heirs and legitimate children of our saintly Father”*), and goes back again to the apostle (*“and of great Saints”*).

Therefore, both, Barnabites and Angelics, to whom these two letters are addressed (the only ones survived), are children of the one and of the other Father.

Fra Battista and Anthony Mary

Fra Battista is not only the model of life proposed by Anthony M. Zaccaria to his disciples, but is, in a special way, the source of his thought and of his spirituality.

Father Cortenovis makes the observation that in the Letters and in the Constitutions of Anthony M. Zaccaria, *“you will see the characters of Fra Battista, who played such a great role in the first enthusiasm of St. Cajetan Thiene.”*

In the Constitutions it is easy to draw a line between the Zaccarian and the Battistian thought, if, as Father Gabuzio says and we will see later, Anthony Mary used as his basis a precedent text written by Father Carioni.

The Holy Founder not only shares Battista’s thought, but he assimilates it to the point

that it almost seems plagiarism.

The similarity of concepts and expressions between the Sermon on lukewarmness and the dedication letter of Fra Battista's booklet, *"Interior Mirror,"* is well known.

What great esteem Anthony Mary had for Fra Battista's publication is clearly stated in his Constitutions, where he urges to read them: *"In a very special way they should delight even more in reading books about the education and formation of morals, about the perfection of life, about the true imitation of Christ, as would be... (Cs VIII, 232:28-30) the books of our Father, Battista da Crema, and other similar books, which, well understood and put into practice, could help us to reach perfection"* (Ibid, 233:4-6).

Fra Battista and the first generation of Barnabites

The Founder's precept was observed to the letter by his first children. They had the manuscripts and many copies of all his publications. They even attributed to them special powers for those who, failing in religious life, needed healthy correction.

In the community meetings, the thoughts of the Dominican permeated the intervention of the confreres. One example is enough to show how, even in the less brilliant or questionable thoughts of Fra Battista, they had been well assimilated by those eager readers.

In the spiritual conference of Pentecost 1548, Gerolamo Torso said, among other things, that he *"had to put off any dear thing, even spiritual, and the same Lord Jesus Christ, for the love of the same Christ"*

The spirit of Battista da Crema

We enter now into a very arduous and unexplored field, Fra Battista's spirituality. We will be satisfied with only few thoughts, mostly taken from the recent critical work by Bogliolo.

At first the reader is impressed by Fra Battista's knowledge of Holy Scripture, and especially St. Paul, whose quotes fill up all his writings. Among sacred writers, Paul is his favorite, maybe because he better corresponds to his character and to his ideals: spiritual battle, implacable fight against lukewarmness. Rightly then Fr. Colosio defines Fra Battista as one full with the spirit of St. Paul.

Fra Battista's concept of life is dominated by Paul's obsession to be a fighter, centered on a fundamental option in every human act: the foolishness of the cross versus human wisdom. Here lies Paul's dilemma: either to be foolish in front of men, and wise in front of God, or foolish in front of God, and wise in front of men. Therefore, the Crucified Lord becomes the goal, the end, the core of Fra Battista's asceticism, just as it will be for Anthony M. Zaccaria. And more: at the same time, the Crucified Lord is the model, the leader, the efficient and final cause of his spiritual teaching.

Besides, Fra Battista's spirituality is apostolic in character as he had a vivid vision of the Mystical Body, therefore, he believed that a true Christian life had to be apostolic in order to lead souls to salvation.

Rather, the more we spread God's love, the more we love God, and the more we grow in perfection. *"Try,"* he writes, *"to suffocate the others and you yourselves will warm up."*

Fra Battista lives the reality of the Mystical Body also in the perspective of sin. The soul who has made progress in perfection is aware to be the cause of Jesus' passion, rather, of the sins of the whole world. (It is enlightening at this point to read what Anthony Mary writes in his Constitutions).

But is it not true that the sense of the Mystical Body, and the idea of sin as a collective punishment, are outstanding Pauline concepts?

Finally we would like to underline a specific characteristic of the Battistian asceticism and mysticism. Carioni believes in a pure love for God, that is an unconditional love which presumes the death of self-love, with paradoxical expressions, as, for example: *“For love of you I am ready to lose the body, the soul, the grace, my own self”* (Remember the “putting off even of Christ for love of Christ” by Torso?).

The key to interpret similar statements is giving to us by Fra Battista himself, when he says: *“Get rid of your will, and there will be no hell; may your will be the will of God, and you will be in Paradise.”*

Also this thesis is based on scriptural passages. Here are three of them: one about Moses who wanted to be eliminated from life for the sake of Israel; and two are from St. Paul, when he speaks about Christ, who has become a curse for our sake, or, speaking about himself, he says he would like to be an anathema for the sake of the brothers.

Now, then, we can understand the determining influence of Fra Battista on Anthony Mary, and so recognize his title as *“Father and Founder”* of the new Order.

The Barnabites who came later, in eras far away from the times of this great reformer, have recognized the primary role he exercised in the life of the Congregation. Here is what Father Cortenovis says: *“You will recognize them from their fruits. The uncontaminated and most pure holiness which flourished among the first descendants of the two Founders (Thiene and Zaccaria), and which for two hundred years has spread the most sweet fragrance of evangelical virtues, it is enough for the apology of the innocent conduct and sweet teaching of the master of the spirit, and of his disciples (that is of Fra Battista, and of the Barnabites).”*

Fra Battista... a heretic!

We know that Fra Battista was the spiritual director of the Founder and of the first Barnabites. His books were approved by the local Inquisitors. But the lively, indeed often paradoxical style of the Dominican had sometime caused him trouble; but his doctrine was always approved even by Paul III (1537), who had ordered a severe investigation about the Friar, by then dead.

Anyway were the holiness of his life and his great influence not enough reasons to clear his writings from any suspicion? Still the Holy Office condemned his doctrine.

He was accused of errors which will be the foundation of “Quietism,” an excessive confidence in one’s own powers, causing a depreciation of grace; the possibility of achieving full “victory over oneself,” therefore, making superfluous the negative recommendations of ascetics; it was such a direct union with God, that prayers were useless, and indifferent the thought of one’s eternal salvation.

We have to note that the Council of Trent toned down this conviction (for sure this was the work of people who were not familiar with Fra Battista’s writings, but relied only on second hand information), leaving on the Index his books, “donec emendentur” (a note which indicates the presence of equivocal sentences, and not erroneous).

Only the canonization of the Founder will force the Holy Office to revoke the conviction.

Our Fathers submitted themselves in an exemplary way to Rome’s deliberations. To suffer all the consequences were Fra Battista’s books, printed or not, sent to the Inquisition to be burned, as Fr. Anthony Pagano says angrily in a letter to Paola Antonia Negri: “Ten days ago, some have gone to Borghetto with two or three of Fra Battista’s booklets, and with a bundle of sticks they have made a fire and have thrown on it all those booklets, saying: ‘these are some heretical books of a certain Fra Battista, apostate.’ And this seems to me a gross error.”

BATTISTA CARIONI da CREMA (1460-1534/5)

- 1460 Born in Crema - A Religious of the Dominican Order in Lombardy.
- 1494 He receives the habit
- 1517 Padua: Sta. Maria delle Grazie
- 1519 Fra Battista meets in Rome Cajetan from Thiene and leads him to the foundation of the first Order of Clerics Regular, the Theatines (1524), under the patronage of St. Peter.
- 1520 Vicenza: Sta. Corona
- 1525 Milan: Sta. Maria delle Grazie outside Porta Vercellina.
- 1527 He meets and converts Ludovica Torelli, Countess of Guastalla (1500-1569).
- 1528 He succeeds Fra Marcello, OP, as spiritual father of Anthony M. Zaccaria.
- 1529 Fra Battista is in Guastalla with proper permits from his Dominican Superiors, as confessor and spiritual guide, under the authority of the Local Ordinary.
Under his influence, Zaccaria, according to the historians, decides to become a Priest, and later he moves his apostolic field from Cremona to Milan.
- 1530 Toward the end of the year, Fra Battista-Zaccaria-Torelli move from Guastalla to Milan
- Eternal Wisdom
- 1530 Breve of Clement VII, August 20, to the Vicar of the Dominicans in Lombardy:
- Fra Battista is accused of having obtained the permit by lies
- bring him back in the monastery, even by force
- *novam quadam doctrinam periculo heresiae et perturbationis.*
- 1533 Zaccaria and companions present petition to Rome for the approval of a new Institute of Clerics Regular, under the patronage of St. Paul: Clement VII, February 18, 1533 (Basilio Ferrari). Meantime Fra Battista's relationship with his Dominican confreres deteriorates: they could not accept his life outside the community. His physical health deteriorates, leading to his death in Guastalla.
- 1534 December 31 (midnight, or early January 1, 1535), Fra Battista dies in Guastalla. The Countess Torelli had him buried in St. Paul's church of the Angelics in Milan.

ASCETICAL WORKS by FRA BATTISTA DA CREMA

- 1523 *Via de Aperta Verità*
- 1531 *Della Cognitione et Vittoria di se stesso*
- 1531 *Philosophia Divina*
- 1540 *Specchio Interiore* (Torelli)
- 1583 *Detti Notabili* (in 2nd edition of *Libro delle Sentenze* - Anthology of Sayings from the Psalms)
- 1525 June 22 - Clement VII approves the 2nd edition of the *Via de Aperta Verità*, examined by Fr. Jerome da Vigevano, OP, and by Fr. Bartolomeo da Pisa.
- 1530 Approval of *Della Cognitione et Vittoria di se stesso*, by the inquisitors Melchior and Bernardin Crivelli.
Compendium by Fr. Serafino Aceti da Fermo and Spanish edition by Bonaventure Cervantes
- 1549 Approval of *Specchio Interiore*, with the Imprimatur by Fra Melchior Crivelli, OP (in 1559 is put on the Index by Paul IV)
Fra Battista's works are "incentives to heresies, or to prestigious impiety, and therefore to intolerable errors." Torelli's appeal to Paul IV, on hearing that in Trent a revision of

the Index was on the way.

1564 New Index with the clause: until they would be amended!

1900 Taken out of the Index following St. Anthony M. Zaccaria's canonization (May 27, 1897).

Pelagianism

Pelagianism by Cassian: no original sin, perfect freedom of right and wrong!

Pelagianism in Christian theology, a rationalistic and naturalistic heretical doctrine concerning grace and morals, which emphasizes human free will as the decisive element in human perfectibility and minimizes or denies the need for divine grace and redemption. The doctrine was formulated by the Romano-British monk Pelagius, a man of considerable learning and austere moral character. About 390 he went to Rome, where, appalled by the lax morals of Roman Christians, he preached Christian asceticism and recruited many followers. His strict moral teaching had particular success in southern Italy and Sicily and was preached openly there until the death (circa 455) of his foremost disciple, Julian of Eclanum.

Pelagius denied the existence of original sin and the need for infant baptism. He argued that the corruption of the human race is not inborn, but is due to bad example and habit, and that the natural faculties of humanity were not adversely affected by Adam's fall. Human beings can lead lives of righteousness and thereby merit heaven by their own efforts. Pelagius asserted that true grace lies in the natural gifts of humanity, including free will, reason, and conscience. He also recognized what he called external graces, including the Mosaic law and the teaching and example of Christ, which stimulate the will from the outside but have no indwelling divine power. For Pelagius, faith and dogma hardly matter because the essence of religion is moral action. His belief in the moral perfectibility of humanity was evidently derived from Stoicism.

Pelagius settled in Palestine about 412 and enjoyed the support of John, bishop of Jerusalem. His views were popular in the East, especially among the Origenists (see Origen). Later, his disciples Celestius and Julian were welcomed in Constantinople (present-day Istanbul) by the patriarch Nestorius, who sympathized with their doctrine of the integrity and independence of the will (see Nestorianism).

Starting in 412, St. Augustine wrote a series of works in which he attacked the Pelagian doctrine of human moral autonomy and developed his own subtle formulation of the relation of human freedom to divine grace. As a result of Augustine's criticisms, Pelagius was accused of heresy, but he was acquitted at synods at Jerusalem and Diospolis. In 418, however, a council at Carthage condemned Pelagius and his followers. Soon afterward Pope Zosimus also condemned him. Nothing more is known of Pelagius after this time.

Nestorianism

Nestorianism is the error that Jesus is two distinct persons. The heresy is named after Nestorius, who was born in Syria and died in 451 AD, who advocated this doctrine. Nestorius was a monk who became the Patriarch of Constantinople and he repudiated the Marian title "Mother of God." He held that Mary was the mother of Christ only in respect to His humanity. The council of Ephesus was convened in 431 to address the issue and pronounced that Jesus was one person in two distinct and inseparable natures: divine and human.

Nestorius was deposed as Patriarch and sent to Antioch, then Arabia, and then Egypt. Nestorianism survived until around 1300.

GIAN PIERO CARAFFA
Bishop of Chieti - Future Pope Paul IV

Paul IV (1476-1559), pope (1555-59), who vigorously carried out the Counter Reformation. Born Gian Pietro Carafa, he was placed in charge of the Inquisition in Rome. After his election to the papacy over the veto of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, he alienated Protestants and Roman Catholics alike with his zeal for reform. Among his projects was the compilation and publication (1559) of the first Index of Forbidden Books. Paul allied with France to drive the Spanish from Italy in 1555, but Spain was victorious. The pontiff denounced the Peace of Augsburg, between the Holy Roman Empire and the Lutheran states, and he would not recognize the abdication of Charles in favor of his brother Ferdinand I. His hatred of Spain led him to quarrel with Mary I, queen of England and wife of Philip II, king of Spain.

(*Encarta*)

- Rigid disciplinary vision.
- Repulsion for religious who left the Regular Community Life and Convents to look for singularity or fame. Not even pastoral needs would convince the inflexible Caraffa to accept derogations to cloistered life.

In his writings Fra Battista was teaching that the we have to deny our own will to the point of being in full conformity with the will of God. To reach this state of grace any means is licit even if questionable, in so far as the intention is right. The good intention, that is, correspondence of the human will with the will of God, then, could not be judged by anyone, because the mystical experience is a personal one, not communicable, and only the person who is making progress in reaching the vittoria di se stesso knows the goodness of his intention and the divine inspiration, enjoying the freedom of the spirit which renders him independent from any master. Not even the Church or any institution could judge the intention of the spiritual person: looking at the external aspect, they would be misled.

Caraffa was attacking this doctrine because he was aware of the subservice results it could cause in the Church if it was accepted. Perhaps, he saw in Fra Battista's staying outside the monastery without a rule of obedience, a disobedience to his superiors, a coherent doctrinal position, "on which basis no right of control was recognized to the institute over the religious experience of the individual. Instead it was exactly through the power used by Church in the immediate future that she was going to be able to exercise her coercive power from which, according to Caraffa, the survival depended in front of the spreading of the heresy at the inside as well as at the outside."

PIUS IV

Pius IV (1499-1565), pope (1559-65), who presided over the conclusion of the Council of Trent. Born Giovanni Angelo Medici in Milan, Italy (he was not related to the famous Medici family of Florence), he was trained as a lawyer. He entered the service of Pope Paul III in 1534, took holy orders in 1545 on being created archbishop of Ragusa, Sicily, and was made a cardinal in 1549. After his election to the papacy he reversed some of

the policies of his unpopular predecessor, Paul IV, particularly that of papal hostility to Spain; he also extended support to King Philip II of France and recognition to Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I. In 1562 he reconvened the Council of Trent, which had been suspended since 1552 (*see* Trent, Council of). A patron of the arts, he gave a number of commissions to Michelangelo.